

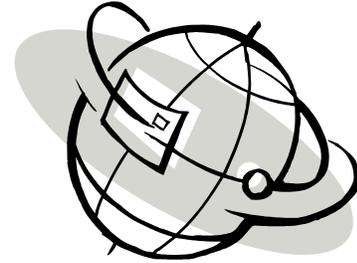
## Sustaining the Organization during the Covid-19 Pandemic

www.njapza.org

2020 has been a year like no other! Local governments throughout the State continue to promulgate revised procedures and protocols for maintaining core services while ensuring the health and safety of local government staff and the general public. During these uncertain times, you might have asked yourself, “how can I better navigate the changes as I serve the public?” Many of us are asking the same questions, but we do not have to navigate the answers alone.

With the onset of COVID-19, our organization had to assess how we would deliver the same top-notch programs, but we first had to review best practices for navigating new ways to work during the pandemic and responding to challenges and opportunities now and down the road. Thanks to our Board of Directors, we were able to continue our educational sessions during this tumultuous year.

With no in person education sessions, NJAPZA offered a total of 10.5 CE credits held via webinars to our membership this year. The webinar series, along with the Spring’s Virtual Office session with SDL, align with the association’s initiative of providing real time guidance to our members on pandemic based challenges.



Of the eight (8) events offered, seven (7) were free for our membership. The response from you, our members, and other affiliates, have been tremendous. Here are examples of some of our recent, customized webinar sessions:

- a) The Dunbar Aftermath- Is there a need for a Uniform Statewide Development Application?
- b) Temporary Sign Regulations in Times of Crisis
- c) Virtual Offices – Spaceships Not Required
- d) Post-COVID Webinar Series Master Plan & Ordinance Development
- e) Post-COVID Webinar Series Redevelopment
- f) Post-COVID Webinar Series - Parking

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## How the State of New Jersey Responded

Just as the staff of local governments adapts their operations in response to the COVID-19 emergency, local land use boards have reevaluated their public meeting procedures in light of public health recommendations. This raised the questions of the extent to which the emergency affords special flexibility for local governments in complying with the typical Open Public Meetings requirements of the State of New Jersey.

*“Like you, we look forward to resuming normal activity in 2021”*

Earlier this year, our governor Phil Murphy issued an official advisory P.L. 2020.c.11 (Read Here -[https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/A4000/3849\\_11.PDF](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/A4000/3849_11.PDF)), which signed into law Bill 3849. This Bill clarified the manner in which public bodies may continue to conduct business during the current state of emergency. The advisory opinion makes the following determinations:

1. Permits a public body to meet by electronic communication means for the duration of the declared pandemic;
2. Does not rescind N.J.S.A emergency meeting provision.

While the NJAPZA is adapting to the realities imposed by the COVID-19 emergency, we are proud to say we have remained resilient because of you, our members, and our educational programs did not decline. Like you, we look forward to resuming normal activity in 2021, but until then, we encourage you to connect with us on our social media platforms, LinkedIn, Facebook and take advantage of the information on our member’s only web portal.

COVID-19 is undoubtedly the primary challenge facing planning, zoning, and land use professionals. It has triggered inevitable changes in how we live and work. With this new reality, the opportunities for NJAPZA are plentiful - from embracing web-based educational offerings for our members that allows the flexibility of digital learning, to overcoming the barriers of location and logistical limitations - it’s just a matter of acting according to the future we want to see.

## Looking Ahead

As we look ahead to what’s next, the lessons learned from year 2020 show how we can help support a better, more resilient and more sustainable future. We are thrilled to bring you even more necessary webinars concerning many of our experiences. As you consider creative new approaches or solutions in planning and zoning, think about how we can continue to support you. Questions from our members are always welcome. Ideas on how we can continue to respond to your needs during this difficult time are encouraged as well.

Just as this crisis has caused many of us to refocus on the things that matter most to us personally, use this time as an opportunity to bring that same focus to your professional life. Reground yourself in the NJAPZA, and use us as a north star to help reach your goals in your land use journey.

The NJAPZA would like to extend our sincere good wishes for you and your family’s continuing good health.

**We’re on LinkedIn  
&  
Facebook**